



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

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Home Safety Month Observed in North Dakota

BISMARCK – In observation of Home Safety Month in June, the North Dakota Department of Health is encouraging residents to identify and correct any potential safety hazards in their homes, according to Diana Read, Injury/Violence Prevention Program director for the Department of Health.

The home is the second most common location of unintentional fatal injuries in the United States; only motor vehicle crashes account for more fatal injuries. Children younger than 5 and adults older than 70 are most at risk for injuries in the home, both fatal and nonfatal.

Older Adults

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), many older adults have loose carpets, overloaded electrical outlets, shaky handrails or no handrails, clogged chimneys, or other potential safety hazards in their homes. These usually are not identified until after an accident in or around the home.

Falls and fires are two leading causes of unintentional injuries and death among adults 65 and older. According to the CPSC, about two-thirds of all hospital emergency room visits by older people involve falls; in addition, older adults have a higher death rate from fires than the general population.

The following tips can help make homes safer for older adults:

- Keep stairs well lit, and tighten any loose handrails.
- Remove loose carpets, cords and other potential trip hazards.
- Keep floors cleared and throw rugs slip resistant.
- Install grab bars in bathrooms.

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- Install smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside every sleeping area and on every floor of your home.
- Install a carbon monoxide alarm outside every sleeping area.
- Don't smoke in bed.
- Keep space heaters away from flammable materials. Hire a professional to check all fuel-burning appliances, including fireplaces, every year.
- Don't wear loose-fitting clothing with long sleeves near ranges or ovens.
- Practice an emergency fire escape plan.

Children

About 2,100 children younger than 15 die each year in the United States as a result of unintentional home injuries. The leading causes of these deaths are fires/burns, choking/suffocation, drowning/submersion, firearms, and poisoning.

According to Read, many things can be done to prevent these deaths and injuries from occurring, including:

- Put toxic substances out of the reach of children.
- Store firearms in locked gun cabinets and ammunition in a different area from the gun.
- Practice safe cooking habits in and around the stove.
- Set the temperature of the hot-water heater to 120 degrees or less.
- Actively supervise children at all times.
- Use the Department of Health's *Home Safety Checklist* to do a safety evaluation of your home. A copy of the checklist is available at www.ndhealth.gov/injury or by calling 701.328.4536.

For more information about making your home safe for children, visit www.ndhealth.gov.

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